



# Upton News

## May 2026

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# The month ahead

## Village calendar

| Mon | Tues  | Weds | Thurs | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|-----|-------|------|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| 27  | 28    | 29   | 30    | 1   | 2   | 3   |
|     |       |      |       | ●   | ●   | △   |
| 4   | 5     | 6    | 7     | 8   | 9   | 10  |
| ●   | ● ●   | ●    | ●     | ●   | ●   | ▲   |
| 11  | 12    | 13   | 14    | 15  | 16  | 17  |
| ●   | ● ●   | ●    | ▲     | ●   | ●   | ✿   |
| 18  | 19    | 20   | 21    | 22  | 23  | 24  |
| ●   | ● ●   | ● ●  | ●     | ●   | ●   | ▲   |
| 25  | 26    | 27   | 28    | 29  | 30  | 31  |
| ●   | ● ● ● | ● ●  | ●     | ● ● | ●   | ●   |

### Village Hall

- Parish Council
- Village Fete
- Uptonogood
- Wine Club
- Brownies
- Community coffee morning
- Upton Christmas Readers
- Dance & Fitness
- Karate
- Dog training
- Kinetic gymnastics
- Tea Birds WI
- ✿ Nature Garden work group

### St Mary's Church

- ▲ Parish Eucharist
- △ Lay-led service
- ▲ Other service

### Waste collection

- Black bin
- Green bin + Brown bin
- Green bin + Brown bin + extra garden waste

### Other

- Weekend/public holiday
- Clocks change
- Upton News deadline

For details of events at the Village Hall please see [here](#):

For details of services at St Mary's Church, please see [here](#):

## Sunrise, sunset & twilight



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# Village News

## St Mary's Church

### *Service times*

| Date                 | Time    | Type  | Prayer focus  |
|----------------------|---------|---|---|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> May  | 9:15 am | Lay-led service   | Weddings,<br>God's blessing on new and existing marriages           |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> May | 9:15 am | Parish Eucharist  | Churchwardens,<br>Our church fabric & churchyards,<br>Churchwardens |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> May | 8:00 pm | Benefice Ascension<br>Day service<br>(wth Blewbury choir) |   |
| 24 <sup>th</sup> May | 9:15 am | Parish Eucharist<br>(followed by APCM)                    | Clergy,<br>All who preach or lead                                   |

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The online services continue every Sunday at 10.30am. Login after 10.00 am to chat beforehand or to check your technology. Please click [here](#) to access log-in details on the Churn Churches website.

### Note to contributors

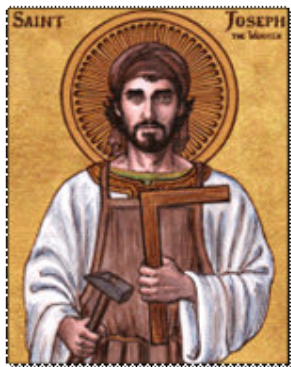
Contributions to Upton News are always very welcome. Please include your name, address and contact details (email and/or phone number) in case clarification is needed: we will not be able to publish your contribution without these details. The editor reserves the right to place, edit, shorten or omit contributions as required.

Please send your contributions by email to [uptonox11news@gmail.com](mailto:uptonox11news@gmail.com)

The deadline for the June 2026 issue is **29<sup>th</sup> May 2026**.

## Father Jason writes

I wonder if you have anything planned for May Day (1<sup>st</sup> May)? This day is rich in customs, many of which go back centuries. Indeed, back in the days of Ancient Rome, there was a custom that on this day the priest of Vulcan would sacrifice a pregnant sow to the goddess Maia.



St. Joseph the Worker  
icon by Theophilia

The custom of sacrificing pigs has, fortunately, fallen out of favour, but there are lots of other customs celebrated at this time of year. We might choose to dance around a Maypole, or to hold a procession, led by a young girl or woman specially chosen to be the Queen of the May. In Oxford, there is still the tradition of May Morning: this involves standing at the bottom of the base of Magdalen tower at 6:00 am in order to hear the choir sing a Latin hymn. I have not attended this event myself, but perhaps you have done so.

In more recent years, May Day has been an occasion to celebrate the importance of workers in our society, and all the improvements in working conditions which have been won over the last hundred years or so. Indeed, in the UK, the May Day Bank Holiday was first instituted, back in 1978, in order to allow time for trade unionists to hold their celebrations. Some years before, in 1955, Pope Pius XII declared that May 1<sup>st</sup> would, from now on, be celebrated as the feast of Joseph the Worker. It would be a public reminder that workers mattered, and that as a society we should ensure that all workers have safe conditions of work and fair remuneration for their labour.

The world of work has changed almost beyond recognition since the days of 1950's, but the need for appropriate regulation and protection remains the same as ever. Employees have the right to expect a safe place of work and fair treatment. There will be disagreements as to what this means in practice, but the general principle remains. We need to treat workers fairly.

For Christians, this is about respecting the value of every human being, and the Christian belief that we should treat one another fairly and with justice. I wonder what this might mean for us? How might we improve the lives of the men and women on whose labour we depend? There are lots of things we might do, but perhaps a good starting point is to appreciate the workers we meet in our everyday lives – the workers who make our own lives possible. I wonder: when was the last time we bothered to thank the delivery driver who dropped off the package we ordered on the Internet? Or the customer service agent who dealt with our query? Everyone deserves to be appreciated, perhaps especially those we can so easily ignore.



A CHAPEL IN THE HEART OF THE COUNTRYSIDE  
Hill Farm, Church Lane, Steventon, OX13 6SW  
[www.ridgewayfuneralservice.co.uk](http://www.ridgewayfuneralservice.co.uk)  
[info@ridgewayfunerals.co.uk](mailto:info@ridgewayfunerals.co.uk)  
01235 355269

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# Upton Parish Council

## Upton Adventure Play Area and Pump Track

Upton Parish Council continues in its endeavours to keep the Upton Adventure Play Area and pump track safe, welcoming, and well maintained for children and families. The annual RoSPA operational inspection was carried out on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2026. While the overall risk levels remain low or medium for the vast majority of equipment, the report highlights a number of routine maintenance tasks for the council to work through over the coming months. These inspections are part of a regular programme recommended by national play safety standards and help us keep on top of wear and tear before it becomes a problem.

We would very much welcome volunteers who are interested in helping us look after the play area and pump track – whether that is joining occasional working parties, helping to monitor issues on site, or sharing practical skills as we plan repairs and improvements. If you are curious about what is involved, or have ideas for how the space could be improved, please come and talk to councillors at the Annual Parish Meeting at 7.00pm in the main Village Hall on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May, where we are especially keen to hear from residents who might like to form a small working group around the play area and its upkeep.

## Wattle Cottage Farm

The council noted the refusal of planning application P25/V2762/FUL at Wattle Cottage Farm, Prospect Road (land to the rear of the public house), which sought permission for a mixed equestrian and Gypsy/Traveller site. In line with the motion agreed at the April meeting, the council has resolved to write to Vale of White Horse District Council and other relevant bodies to make further representations on planning and enforcement matters relating to this site, reflecting the significant concerns previously raised locally about flood risk, highway access, landscape impact and biodiversity.

## Community Land purchase

The community land purchase is also progressing, and the council is continuing to shepherd the associated legal and financial steps towards completion. Alongside this, the Community Land working group is planning a drop-in style public

session to gather ideas and feedback from villagers about how the land might best be used, and to understand both the community's vision for the space and how people may be prepared to help with future projects. We hope that an open meeting, led by the working group, can be held in a few weeks' time so please watch this space for dates and details, and do consider coming along to share your thoughts.

## Uptonogood?

Uptonogood? – Upton's own mountain bike festival – returns on **Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2026** with a full day of off-road rides for all ages and abilities starting from Upton Village Hall and the recreation ground.

The Parish Council would like to pay a heartfelt tribute to the dedicated organisers and wider team of volunteers who plan, organise and run Uptonogood? each year – it is their energy and commitment that make this much loved event such a triumph for our community. Beyond the great fun on the day, the organisers have generously directed donations back into the heart of the village over the years, providing valuable support for local projects such as the play area and pump track, and the Council is simply delighted to encourage and back this kind of community led initiative wherever it can.

## Help needed!

We are currently seeking an additional member to join Upton Parish Council to help share the workload and support the projects we are trying to take forward on behalf of the village and parish. If you are community-minded, willing to read the papers, attend meetings and get involved in topics such as planning, play areas, traffic, or community matters, we would be delighted to speak with you at the Annual Parish Meeting or via the Clerk at any time.

## Next meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on **Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2026** at 7:00 pm in the Village Hall. As always, the Council would like to invite comments from all villagers on any matter with which they have concern. These should be sent by [email](#) to the Parish Clerk. The Minutes of previous Parish Council meetings can be found [here](#).

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# Upton Annual Parish Meeting

This is NOT a Parish Council meeting: it is a meeting for YOU, the residents of Upton. Please join us on **Wednesday May 6<sup>th</sup>** from 7:00 pm. We'd love to see you there!

We will be presenting the Parish Council Annual Report and hosting a Community Showcase for all local groups. It will also be your opportunity to hear the latest updates on the Chapel Furlong land acquisition, discuss planning matters and see what our local clubs have been doing this year.

We will also host an informal discussion session focusing on current and future projects and priorities, including potential expenditure. Residents are encouraged to continue conversations, ask questions, or leave written comments. Handouts and displays will be available before and after the meeting to help inform discussion

Then stay for a glass of wine and a catch-up with neighbours and councillors. If you would like to suggest a topic for discussion ask a specific question in advance of the meeting or showcase your activities, please contact either the Parish [Clerk](#) or the Parish Council [Chair](#)

## Upton Full Fibre

First, the good news: around 40% of the village responded positively to last month's mail drop and expressed an interest in having full fibre installed to their property. Unfortunately, that's where the good news ends. We had a call on 23<sup>rd</sup> April with Craig Bower the Digital Infrastructure Programme Director at Oxfordshire County Council (OCC). Craig has been helping in our quest to get Full Fibre installed in Upton but the more we get into this, the more it seems we have dropped into a Kafka novel, populated by "*clowns to the left of me, jokers to the right*" as Stealers Wheel put it.

For reasons unknown, Openreach have split Upton into two parts (see [here](#)). According to this map, Openreach have unspecified (and undated) plans to install Full Fibre in one part of the village and no plans to install it in the other. This split is at odds with the response from Openreach's postcode checker [website](#) which indicates that Openreach

are "*planning to build in your area*" across the whole village. To try and clear the confusion, we have managed to make contact with the new CEO of Openreach who responded very quickly and has agreed to investigate this issue, so we're hopeful of a response soon.

Unfortunately, addresses included within Openreach's "plans" are not eligible for the BDUK voucher scheme, which makes Upton a less attractive target for Airband. Furthermore, they submitted an initial "*confirmation of eligibility*" for a scheme in West Challow to BDUK over a month ago and have still not received a response: the target time for response is 5 working days. Airband are, understandably, reluctant to expend time and effort on preparing a voucher application for Upton if it just sits in an inbox at BDUK. Plans for the voucher scheme have to be submitted by end August 2026 so it is looking unlikely that Upton will qualify.

There are some alternative options and recent correspondence with Openreach does offer some hope but we're not holding our breath. In the worst case scenario, Full Fibre will not be installed in Upton until 2032. We find this completely unacceptable for a village located only a few km from Harwell Campus, "*the UK's leading science and innovation campus, the home for global organisation and the brightest minds in science*".

As you can imagine, this impasse has caused immense frustration. We have contacted Olly Glover MP, who has thrown his full support behind this project and we are maintaining contact with OCC. We continue to explore other avenues along which to make progress but would welcome any suggestions from villagers to move the project forward.

## Upton Neighbourhood Watch

Things have been quiet in the village during the last month - let's hope this continues! The next meeting will be **Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May at 7:30 pm** at the church. We hope to see you there!

# YOUR VILLAGE. YOUR VOICE.

Upton  
Parish Council

*Come and tell us what matters to you*



## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

**HAVE YOUR SAY**  
*on what matters most*

### JOIN THE CONVERSATION ON:



PARISH  
MATTERS



PLANNING



COMMUNITY  
PROJECTS & EVENTS



LOCAL  
ISSUES



WEDNESDAY  
**6TH MAY**  
**2026**



FROM  
**7:00PM**



THE  
**VILLAGE HALL,**  
UPTON



*Stay for a glass of  
wine and a chat*



**ALL RESIDENTS  
WELCOME**



# Upton Wine Club

April's wine club evening was one of those rare occasions that will linger well beyond the last glass being poured. On paper, it sounded simple enough: members were invited to bring along a wine of their choice and say a few words about why they had selected it. In reality, what unfolded was something far more special — an evening that proved it's not always what's in the glass that matters most, but the stories that swirl around it.

Rather than focusing on tasting notes, grape varieties or regions (though there was some of that for those who wanted it), the evening became a gentle journey into the lives, memories and passions of the people presenting. Each bottle was a small window into someone's world: a holiday remembered fondly, time well spent with friends, a need to prove that they can present a cheap bottle of wine (!), or simply a moment that made it appropriate to share with everyone.

Over the course of the evening, we tasted seven wines, each one distinct, not just in style but in spirit. With every glass poured, laughter followed naturally - sometimes at a self-deprecating

anecdote, sometimes at a story that struck a chord with others around the table. There was no pressure to be an expert, no right or wrong way to describe what was in the glass. Instead, the focus was on listening, sharing, and enjoying each other's company.

What made the night truly magical was the shift in emphasis. It became less about judging the wines and more about enjoying the conversation with the members who had brought them. Conversations flowed easily and the room took on that unmistakable hum of people enjoying being exactly where they were meant to be.

By the end of the evening, as the final glasses were emptied and the remaining bottles finally cleared away, there was a shared sense that we'd experienced something quietly memorable. Seven wines, countless stories, lots of laughter, and the reminder that wine, at its very best, is not about prestige or perfection. It's about connection.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who took part and had the confidence to share a little of themselves along with their wine. If this evening taught us anything, it's that the most memorable nights are often the simplest: good company, a few stories, and a glass raised together.

If you would like to come along to May's meeting see what we do for yourself then either wait for the normal invites to be sent or check us out on our [website](#), [email](#) us or speak to the 50 or so villagers who are already members.

## Christian Aid Week

Please note on your calendars that Christian Aid Week this year is **10<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> May**. Envelopes for your generous contributions will be delivered beforehand and the week will end with our now traditional Garden Party at **3:00 pm on 16<sup>th</sup> May** in the grounds of St Mary's Church. There will be delicious home-made refreshments, a generous raffle, a sale of garden plants and polite conversation. What better way to spend an afternoon and support a worthy cause?

Many guests and new volunteers are welcome - please contact Malcolm Wright (01235-850705) for further details

STRICTLY  WINE

Pick of Montagne de Reims Champagnes

Palmer & Co, Grands Terroirs Brut 2015



*"Palmer's 2015 vintage has continued to develop. It has reached a plateau of richness, with pecan and demerara over its clean, precise and approachable fruit. Drink 2026-2036"*

**Outstanding 95pts, Decanter, April 2026**

[www.strictlywine.co.uk](http://www.strictlywine.co.uk)

[sales@strictlywine.co.uk](mailto:sales@strictlywine.co.uk)

**01235 364536**

# Uptonogood? Mountain Bike Festival

Since 2010, Uptonogood? has raised over £100k for local good causes and organisations, with over £59k of this spent on our recreation field and village hall facilities. The event owes its success in large part to the good folks of Upton volunteering in numbers. This year's Uptonogood? MTB Mountain Bike Festival will be held on **20<sup>th</sup> June 2026**. If you would like to help at this year's event, please register [here](#) where you will be able to nominate a charity of your choice for a £25 donation as a "thank you" from us.



## Uptonogood? Village Hall Cafe

It's that time of year again when we are planning our rota for the village hall cafe for the Uptonogood? on **Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2026**. This fantastic event brings in cyclists and non cyclists from far beyond Upton and the Village Hall cafe is an important part of the day.

If you feel that you can spare a few hours to serve tea and coffee or help those with their delicious cake selections, then please do get in touch. The cafe runs from early in the morning to sell-out time, so we do need as many volunteers as possible to make it run smoothly.

Please get in touch and let me know what time of day would suit you best and how long you can help out for. It's a fun event and everyone is super friendly so the time flies by. If you are not available on the day, perhaps you can help with baking in advance. We are always keen to receive the delicious Upton bakes and these can be dropped off from 8:00 am on the day or the day before if you message Liz Evans either on Whatsapp (07715477868) or by [email](#).

# Upton Fete 2026

Mark your calendars for **Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September 12:00 noon to 4:00 pm**.

Enjoy a traditional village fete and help raise money for the village amenities, the school and the church. Enjoy the displays, show off your vintage car, watch the dog enjoy the BBQ and relax with tea and cakes whilst listening to the musicians.

How to help now?

- Can you make some marmalade, or jam this summer, for the ever-popular produce stall?
- Do you know a local choir who would be able to perform in September?
- Can you face-paint, or know someone who could volunteer their time?

We also need helpers to run a stall, park cars, entertain the crowds, or help put gazebos up and down. If you can help, please contact the Fete Committee via the Upton Help Group on WhatsApp, the Village Social Facebook page or drop a note through my door (Kathryn Fletcher, Sine Nomine - opposite the church).

### WANTED: UPTON VILLAGE HALL TRUSTEES

#### Help Support Our Village Hall

We are looking for **new volunteer trustees** to join the team that manages and supports our Village Hall – a valued space for events, activities, and community use. The hall was built by members of the village in 1966, expanded in 2010 and completely refurbished in 2015. Its future relies on a volunteer committee of trustees to keep it running for the community.

#### What does a trustee do?

- Attend meetings (quarterly)
- Ensure the smooth running, maintenance and upkeep of the hall
- Manage bookings and events
- Manage the hall website and communications
- Share ideas and contribute to the future of the hall

Whether you've lived in the village for years or are new to the village, we'd love to hear from you.

#### If you are interested and would like to know more:

Please contact: Liz, Andy or Nicky

Email: [trustees@uptonvillagehall.co.uk](mailto:trustees@uptonvillagehall.co.uk)



# Local News

## Blewbury Players



Whilst our production team and cast beaver away designing, building, sewing, and line learning for *The Wind in The Willows* (15<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> July) our next events are...

***A Flye on the Wall: An Evening's Entertainment of Songs, Sketches, Memories and Merriment to celebrate our venerable Village and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Blewbury Players; 20<sup>th</sup> June***

This event will be held at St Michael's Church, Blewbury, on 20<sup>th</sup> June, starting at 7:30 pm. Our online box office will open on 29<sup>th</sup> May (see QR code opposite). Tickets are £15 and include a glass of wine



Based on the beloved tradition of the British Music Hall, the cast includes a company of old friends: Catie Flye and her cousin Ian Clarke tapping the ivories with gusto; actor Garth Bardsley hot-foot from the West End; soprano Rosa Lamoreaux all the way from Washington DC and our very own local thespian, Chris Mousley Jones. The show also includes musical favourites together with audience participation

***The Wind in the Willows, 15<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> July 2026***

The summer production at Orchard Dene Garden Theatre, Blewbury will be "*The Wind in the Willows*" written by Kenneth Grahame, adapted by Alan Bennett and directed by Ed White. We are now fully cast for our performances of *The Wind in the Willows* but if anyone is interested in technical support (i.e. lighting, sound, AVA, sewing, etc) do get in touch either by [email](#) or through our [website](#). We are prepared to support with training and mentoring etc.

***Fifty Years of Blewbury Players: Exhibition, Orchard Dene Garden, 15<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> July.***

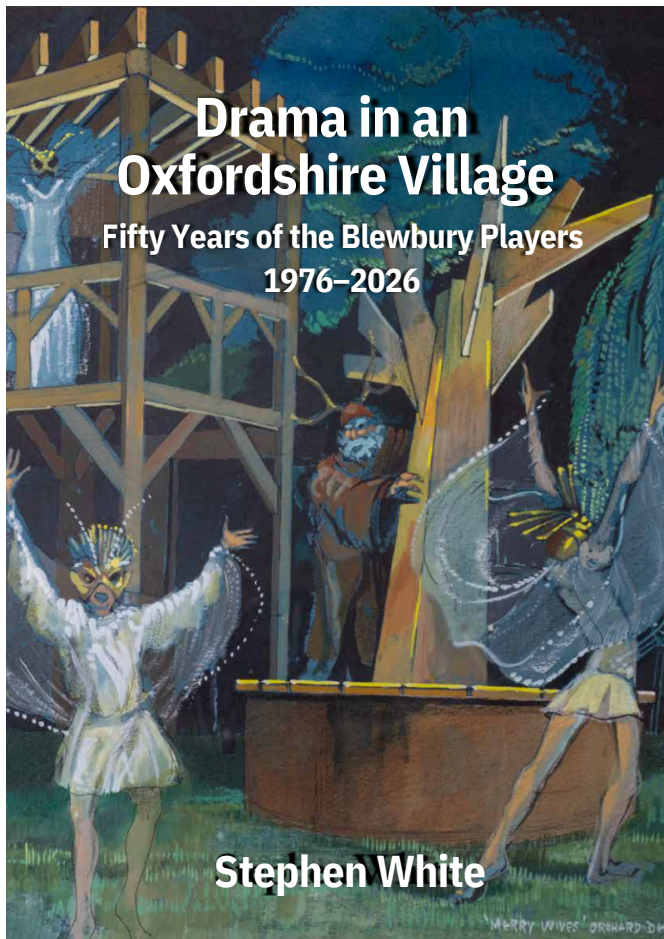
If you have props, costumes, pieces of scenery, which were produced for any of the many shows (including old time music halls and operas) produced over the last fifty years, we would love to borrow them. We would also love to include memories from any of the shows. We would particularly like to hear from people involved not just on stage, but also as part of the many areas involved in the productions, such as: backstage, construction, costume and make-up, working in the box office, the bar or the car-parking. The list is endless! Any comments we receive will be included, anonymously in the exhibition. Please email [Jo](#) if you can help

***Drama in an Oxfordshire Village: Fifty Years of the Blewbury Players. Publication date: 14<sup>th</sup> July 2026. Price: £25***

We would be very grateful if you would consider pre-ordering to help us cover the up-front costs of printing. Every pre-ordered copy will be signed by Steve! You can order via our [website](#) or using the QR code overleaf. Explore 300 pages packed with 270 images and reviews of 62 major Blewbury Players productions. Perfect for Blewbury locals, past cast and crew, theatre-lovers, and anyone who loves the charm (and chaos) of village life. Funny, factual and brilliantly researched, this book takes you behind the scenes—from post-war Blewbury and the buzzing drama years of the 60s and 70s to the moment the Players was born. See how a local group became a true community cornerstone and earned a reputation far beyond the village.

***A Christmas Carol – Winter 2026.***

This will be held at St Michael's church, Blewbury between 25<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> November. More news soon...



## Blewbury Post Office

With spring in full swing, we'd like to thank everyone for their continued support of Blewbury Village Store and Post Office. It's lovely to see the village coming to life again as we head into the warmer months. Our regular opening hours remain:

|                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Mon/Tues/Thurs/Fri: | 9:00 am – 3:00 pm  |
| Weds:               | 9:00 am – 12:00 pm |
| Sat/Sun:            | closed             |

Please note that we will be closed during the bank holidays on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May and Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May. During half-term (Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May to Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May) we will be operating reduced hours:

|             |                    |
|-------------|--------------------|
| Mon to Fri: | 9:00 am – 12:00 pm |
|-------------|--------------------|

Normal opening hours will resume from Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June.

We've had some lovely new additions arrive in store this month!

### ✦ Crystals Collection

We now have a beautiful range of crystals available - each one completely unique and full of character. Whether you're drawn to their natural beauty, calming energy, or just love having something a little different, they make eye-catching pieces for the home or thoughtful gifts.

### 🧶 Handmade Crochet Items

We're also stocking a gorgeous selection of handmade crochet pieces, including cardigans, baby clothes, blankets, and soft stuffed toys. Each item has been lovingly crafted and makes a perfect gift for little ones (or a cosy treat for yourself!).

Alongside these, we continue to stock all your everyday essentials, fresh free-range eggs, local honey, and sweet treats.

Thank you, as always, for supporting your local Post Office and village shop - it truly means a lot to us and helps keep our community thriving.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

## Blewbury WI

Blewbury WI's next meeting will be **Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May** when we will have a talk entitled "*It could have been me*". This talk is about understanding the Holocaust through the life of a victim and his family. The Holocaust, known in Hebrew as the Shoah, was the genocide of European Jews and other ethnic minorities during World War II. We meet at 7.30pm in the Vale room of Blewbury Village Hall.

Also on offer are monthly meetings, playing informal games of Scrabble, Mah Jong and Rummikub. A book club, a monthly craft get together plus a monthly coffee morning usually at Style Acre in Blewbury. We are shortly having a trip to see Jane Austen's house and museum – such variety! A super group of lively, supportive ladies.

Although our WI is currently full, we are running a shorter waiting list. If you are thinking of coming as a visitor please ring Joy on 850543 or contact us by [email](#) to ensure that this will work (we don't want the room to be too full - H&S and all that ...).

# Blewbury School Report



*Small Schools League Match Report By Matvii and Liam, Year 6, Blewbury School*

On Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March, we went to Harwell to play the second part of the Small Schools League, and it was a really exciting day! First, we played a friendly match against Harwell. It was a tough game and we lost 3–1, but it helped us warm up for the rest of the tournament.

Next, we played a league match against Whitchurch and drew 1–1. Liam scored an amazing backheel goal, which was definitely one of the highlights of the day! After that, we played St Johns and won 3–1. The goals were scored by Matvii, Jai and Archie, and we worked really well together as a team. In our final match, we played Stanford and won 3–0. Rudy and Archie scored, with Archie getting two brilliant goals!

Overall, it was a great tournament, and we were really proud of how we played as a team. We also drew with Harwell overall, so we will keep the cup for half a year before sending it to them for the other half.

There were some fantastic individual performances too. Rudy was an excellent goalkeeper, making some amazing saves, including shots heading for the top corner. Theo made some great throw-ins, Wen and Robert were strong in defence and helped set up goals, and Reegan was powerful in midfield, especially in the game against Stanford.

We all had a brilliant time and showed great teamwork throughout the day!

## Astons Online

Astons Online CIC provides tech support for people who want to be digitally confident on the Internet, with smartphone apps or online services like health and banking. Astons Online CIC events and support are free of charge and open to everyone. We're available for one-to-one sessions on Tuesday mornings between 10:00 am and 12:00 noon using Zoom, Facetime, WhatsApp or telephone. Please book a 30 minute appointment by [email](#) or by phone (07780 958249).

Our next in-person meeting will be held in Aston Upton Village Hall (OX119EQ) on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May from 10:00 am to 12 noon. Tech support is free for computer users so please book a one-to-one appointment with one of our digital helpers or register for 10:30 briefing and Q&A session on the *Landline Switchover to Digital*.

Didcot based charity *Getting Oxfordshire Online* would love to have your unwanted laptops, tablets and smartphones to distribute to others who are not able to have their own. Demand in the county is greater than supply so any used devices would be welcome. Contact us by email or phone as above.



Julian March | Yvette Phillips | Karina Tarin | Eleanor Wong

2,3,4,9 &  
10th May  
11-6pm

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| TWITTEN<br>ASTON STREET<br>OX11 9DQ<br>53 & 54 | HEATHERSAGE<br>ASTON STREET<br>OX11 9DJ<br>55, 56 & 57 | FINCHES<br>BAKER STREET<br>OX11 9DD<br>58, 59 & 60 |
|--|--|--|

## ART IN THE ASTONS

# ART SHOW

2-10 May 2026  
Weekends & Bank Holiday: 10am-5pm  
Weekdays: 10am-3pm  
The Clubhouse  
Boham's Road, Blewbury  
OX11 9HF



## Oxfordshire Art Weeks

Blewbury and Aston Tirrold will be taking part in the Oxfordshire Artweeks festival, which runs throughout May with over 400 venues to visit; for further details, please visit the Artweeks [website](https://www.artweeks.org).

The exhibition in Blewbury will be held at Blewbury Clubhouse, Boham's Road, OX11 9HF from **2<sup>nd</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> May**. Opening time are:

weekends & bank holiday 10:00 am – 5:00 pm  
weekdays 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

The Blewbury exhibition features the works of four Oxfordshire artists: Julian March, Yvette Phillips, Karina Tarin, and Eleanor Wong. Each artist brings their own unique medium to life.

### **JULIAN MARCH - Ceramics**

Jules is all about soul food crockery. His collection spans the functional and the decorative: from bowls and plates to vases and jugs: food to flowers. What sets Jules' work apart are the interesting and vibrant colour combinations, paired with quirky, playful

shapes that add character and charm to every piece. Much like humans, every piece carries its own small idiosyncrasies, making each creation special in its own right, just like us - perfectly imperfect, and full of personality.

### **YVETTE PHILLIPS - Textiles & Embroidery**

Yvette combines vintage fabrics with intricate hand embroidery to create boldly coloured and visually striking works of art. Her pieces range from small, finely detailed embroidered works to large-scale collages, each showcasing a rich and diverse palette of colours, patterns, and textures. Her work is deeply inspired by her love of nature and the natural world.

### **KARINA TARIN - Oil Painting**

Karina's richly coloured narrative oil paintings are inspired by ancient stories, symbolism, Renaissance and medieval art. Her work is a celebration of resilience, beauty and the magic that is an intangible part of our everyday lives. She is drawn to the age-old stories that are told to make sense of life and the powerful natural world around us - the myths, fables, folklore

and symbolism that are woven into our collective understanding of the world and our place in it.

### **ELEANOR WONG - Semi-abstract Painting**

Ellie's practice explores connections - to oneself, others, and the world we inhabit - through animals as powerful gateways revealing human essence. Inspired by childhood play and her children's unfiltered creativity, she builds dioramas to capture scenes, energy and imagined dialogues, drawing from them to create layered paintings, blending, oil, acrylic and ink.

The exhibition in Aston Tirrold will be held at three separate locations between **2<sup>nd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> May**. Opening time are:

weekends & bank holiday 11:00 am – 6:00 pm  
weekdays closed

## **Jackie's Care**

Are you looking for trustworthy, one-to-one care tailored to your needs? At Jackie's Care, I am proud to provide high-quality care services, at highly competitive rates, 7 days a week. I can offer the following Services:

- Personalized Care Plans: Tailored to meet your individual needs.
- Shopping Assistance: Help with errands and groceries.
- Medication Administration: Ensuring your health is a top priority.
- Appointments Support: Assistance with scheduling and attending appointments.
- Companionship: A caring presence to brighten your day.
- Administrative Work: Support with paperwork and managing daily tasks.
- Overnight Care: Comprehensive support through the night.

Please contact me by phone (07712455093) or email ([jackiefideria@yahoo.com](mailto:jackiefideria@yahoo.com))

## **United Charities**

If you, or someone you know, is struggling with the cost of living, we are able to support people of all ages living in Upton, the Aston and Blewbury. We have funds to give a helping hand from the cost of the weekly food shop or clothing and equipment for school, to energy bills, or a one-off payment for essential items.



You can pick up a short application from the porch of St Mary's Church, or make a request by [email](#). We can help you fill in the form and please don't be reluctant to ask for help, all applications are totally confidential.

In 2025 we were able to support individuals, couples and families in Upton, Blewbury and the Astons, who were struggling during a year of rising living costs, and we hope to continue to offer the same level of support throughout 2026. But like many charities, we rely on the generosity of donations to make this possible.

We are aware that we have reached out to our local community before and are grateful to those of you who have generously made it possible for us to help local people in need. However, as the economy this year is likely to still leave household stretched for cash, we continue to look for a helping hand. Any amount of money would be appreciated and can be donated through our [Just Giving page](#)

We thank you very much in advance and if you have any questions, please do get in touch with us by [email](#)

# Vale News

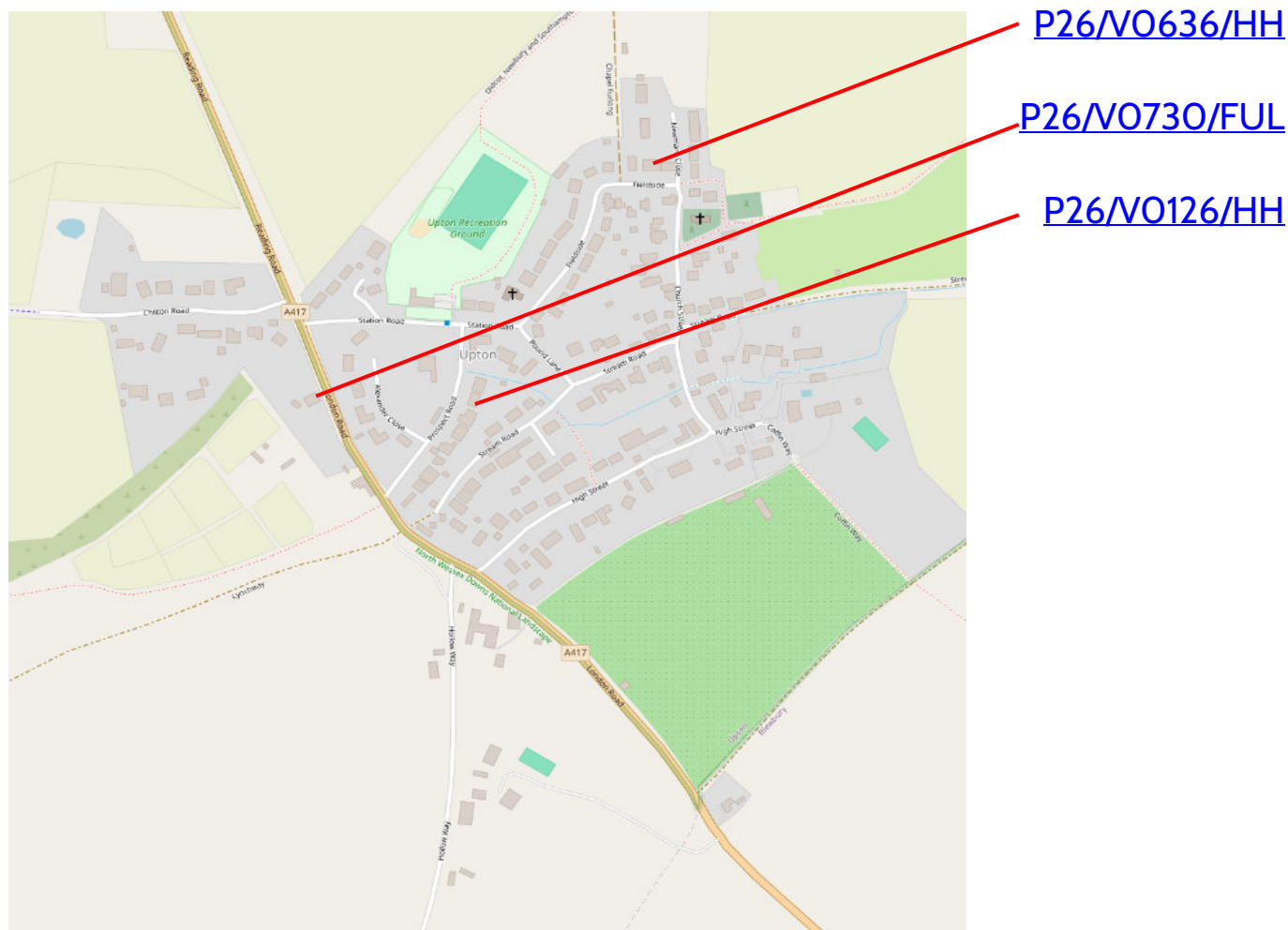
## VoWHDC News

### Local councillor's report

Yet again, we did not receive a report from our local VoWHDC councillors this month.

### Current planning applications

The map below shows the location of all planning applications within the parish of Upton that are *Under Consultation* or *Under Consideration* and were registered between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2026.



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## Olly Glover (MP)



Spring is a beautiful time across the constituency, with warm sunshine at last, and so many roadsides and woods enhanced by daffodils and bluebells.

In recent months, I have been engaging in many local community campaigns, including the sudden closure of East Hagbourne Post Office. During a visit to the East Hagbourne Community Shop, I met with the shop's dedicated volunteers. They explained that the Post Office closure limits residents' access to essential services and risks the future of the community shop. This small establishment brings so much value to the community; its loss would be felt significantly. Having already met with the national Post Office organisation directly, I will continue to work with the East Hagbourne community and raise this case with government ministers to find a solution.

Trump's illegal military actions in Iran have caused significant death and global disruption to gas and oil supplies, which rural areas have felt the brunt of. Many constituents have expressed concerns over tripling oil prices and the need for urgent support for rural communities, many of whom are dependent on heating oil for warmth. I signed an Early Day Motion to introduce a three-month zero rating of VAT and price caps to help alleviate some of this financial burden. The government must take further action to protect rural residents who are vulnerable to sudden price rises.

In Parliament I raised concerns about local government funding, road safety, and improving women's health. In a debate on the condition of rural roads, attended by MPs representing dozens of counties all frustrated by the state of their

roads, I spoke about the need for better approaches to road design, maintenance, and repair across the country. Funding to maintain our roads must be spent both on fixing potholes, and on long-term, preventative work, such as drainage improvements and surface dressing.

Back in the constituency, I have spent time with some incredible community organisations, education facilities, and local businesses. I had a beautiful tour of the nature reserve at the Sutton Courtenay Environmental Education Centre, near Milton Park, run by the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT), which educates the community about protecting nature and local wildlife. In addition, I answered questions from Year 12 Politics students at Wallingford School.

I had a fascinating visit to Moderna Innovation and Technology Centre, a biotechnology company manufacturing vaccines based on Harwell Campus, and learnt about Infinis, based in Sutton Courtenay, who are turning gases from landfill sites into renewable energy.

After an excellent lunch at the White Hart in Harwell, I spoke with the publican about ongoing pressures on the local hospitality industry. I have joined Liberal Democrat colleagues in calling for a 5% VAT cut for hospitality, and against government policies on business rates and employer national insurance contributions, which are making life very difficult for our hospitality sector. I also attended Wantage and Grove Street Pastors on an evening patrol, engaging with the local community.

These constituency activities help me understand the day-to-day challenges faced by people and organisations in the local area, and I will continue to hold the Labour government to account and push for change at a national level.

As always, if there is anything you feel I can help you with please do not hesitate to contact me and my team either by [email](#), or by leaving a voice message at 0207 219 7657.

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## Didcot u3a

If you have recently retired or are semi-retired, live in Didcot or the surrounding area and are looking for new interests whilst making new friendships, then please consider joining the Didcot & District U3A to . . . . . “*Learn, Laugh, Live!*”

With over 30 Interest Groups, you could learn a new language, delve into your family history, enjoy walking with friends, learn to play an instrument, and many more: full details can be found [here!](#)

New members are always warmly welcomed to join (first visit is ‘free to see’) and chat over tea and biscuits at the monthly meetings held on the third Tuesday of every month in the Didcot Civic Hall, starting at 2:30 pm.

Meetings for the coming months will include;

- 21 Apr *Forensic Experience;*  
Speaker: Hayley Scott  
This is your opportunity to hear all about the life of a real “*Crime Scene Investigator*” when Hayley Scott shares her experiences working for the Metropolitan Police for 14 years as a CSI.
- 19 May *AGM plus talk*  
Speaker: Emma Teasdale  
Emma will be raising the awareness of domestic abuse.
- 16 Jun *An ABC of Victorian painters*  
Speaker: Simon Evers  
Victorian painters reacted to the social issues of the day by leveraging their positions as prominent personalities to publish articles in political periodicals, give their artworks to charity auctions, create banners or posters for social movements, or paint scenes that addressed the country’s most urgent problems.

For more information about the nationwide self-help teaching and learning organisation that is u3a please contact us [here](#). We look forward to seeing you soon!

## Didcot Lawn Bowls Club

Didcot Lawn Bowls Club is delighted to invite you to our Open Weekend on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Whether you’re completely new to bowls or just curious to give it a try, you’ll find a warm welcome waiting. We’re a friendly and supportive club, open to all ages and abilities, and our members will be on hand to guide you through your first few ends - no experience needed. This is a no-charge event where you can turn up between these times on either/both days to try your skills at bowling. If you do not want to bowl on the day, or if it is raining heavily, you may just want to visit our facility, have a tour and/or just ask questions. Come and talk to us!

Generally ages from about 10 years old and upwards (no upper limit!) are accepted on The Green

It’s a great opportunity to enjoy some fresh air, meet new people, and discover a sport that’s both relaxing and surprisingly engaging. All equipment is provided - just bring flat-soled shoes (a must!) and come along for a chat and a roll-up. Easy parking behind Didcot Civic Hall. We’d love to see you there!

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# News from Afar

## Oxfordshire County Councillor's report



Over the last few weeks, I've had a short period away, so thank you to those who've patiently waited to hear back from me. I really appreciate your understanding; I'm working steadily through messages and queries and will respond as quickly as I can.

I hope everyone had a restful Easter period. Working in higher education, I was fortunate to have a full week off, which gave me the opportunity to catch up on council duties and some important pieces of work that have been moving forward over recent months.

One significant development this month has been the opening meeting of the review panel examining the circumstances around the forced academisation of an Oxfordshire SEND school. I was asked to chair this panel. The review will look carefully at what happened, how decisions were reached, and whether there were shortcomings in process or communication. If any families or staff have been affected by the situation at Woodeaton and would like to contribute, please do get in touch — I am keen that the panel hears from as broad a range of experiences as possible.

A large part of the last couple of weeks has also been taken up with emails, calls and meetings with officers in relation to highways issues across the division. After first raising concerns on 3rd March, the problematic lane markings at the Milton Interchange have now finally been corrected. This

followed discussions with officers, who advised that the replacement markings were technically "legal". There was a strong cross-party effort to have the lines reinstated to their previous layout, and I'm pleased that this has now been achieved.

In Blewbury, some long-awaited roadworks were left only partially completed and to a poor standard. After visiting the site and documenting the areas of concern, I've been promised a further update by the end of this week.

Finally, SGN unexpectedly announced proposals for a major closure of Harwell High Street lasting over three months. Following several calls with senior officers, this plan has now been withdrawn and replaced with temporary traffic lights while a gas main is replaced. The caveat remains that if work uncovers a particularly awkwardly located main, this could still revert to a full closure. If that happens, I have been clear that a comprehensive plan must be in place for access, parking, bin collections and deliveries, and that a shuttle bus must be provided at SGN's expense to maintain access to bus services.

I will continue to push for clearer information and better communication around highways works, and appreciate your patience while I try to push through the improvements we're all hoping for.

### *Transport update*

No transport update received for May 2026.

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## Resident's queries

Recent queries I've raised on behalf of residents and Parish Councils are given below:

| Description                 | Status                         | Outcome  |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Blewbury road safety        | In progress                    | Funding for a puffin crossing at Savages has been submitted for inclusion in forward plan of works (2026/27 financial year). Officer should be in touch shortly  |
| Harwell roadworks           | In progress                    | Investigation into the Grove Road works is ongoing – I have pushed for more information on this. After raising with Officers in context of roadworks in the area in general not meeting expectations, was offered a meeting – provided availability and then no response |
| Road safety issues on A417  | In progress                    | Crossing confirmed at the Winnaway, with other speeding measures to be included as part of the works. Have asked for an update. Included in budget for 26/27 so officer should be in touch shortly   |
| Coffin Way cycle-path       | Awaiting response              | Requested briefing on previous work re: footpath/potential cycle route between Blewbury and Upton – relevant officer on leave. Meeting date being arranged but keeps being passed around to different people   |
| Hagbourne Hill improvements | Response received; followed up | Query re: safety improvements, kerbing/widening etc. Initial response is that we are currently reviewing historical planning decisions, with a view to selecting the best option for improvement, but no firm plan yet. I've asked for a timeline                        |

## Other news and information

### Harwell Campus consultation

Harwell campus is consulting on its long-term plans for the site. There will be a programme of live events, but you can also offer your feedback [here](#).

### HWRC Booking System

You now need to book a slot to visit any of the Household Waste Recycling Centres. When visiting, you will need to bring proof of address. If you're unable to sort your recycling in advance, you will be asked to do so onsite in the designated sorting areas. For more information or to book your slot please follow this [link](#).

### Carers Phone Friends

This service from Carers Oxfordshire offers support to unpaid carers by connecting them with trained volunteers who understand the challenges of caring. You can find out more [here](#).

### Councillor Priority Fund

All County Councillors have access to a pot of funding to support local community projects. Applications are open until November 2026. The minimum grant is £500, and there are rules regarding eligibility of applicants and projects. You can read more [here](#).

# Thames Valley Police Commissioner

Mobile phones are ubiquitous, and bring many benefits in life, but they also create real problems, particularly within schools. Most schools will have some kind of “phone free” policy; but how effectively these are enforced varies hugely.

Last month I met with teachers and governors from several schools at Aureus Secondary School to talk about their approach to banning phones in school.

They have adopted a particular system, using lockable pouches, but there are lots of other things used by schools, such as lock boxes. For most of us a mobile phone is a useful - sometimes indispensable - addition to our lives, but during the school day they distract pupils, disrupt classes, can lead to poor discipline and lower attainment.

There are a number of perceived barriers to implementing a proper phone free policy in school - phones connected to medical devices, and young carers for example - but the experience of schools that have embraced a proper ban shows that these problems can be overcome. The benefits of removing the distraction can hugely outweigh the costs, reducing disruption, truancy and bullying.

I've already been in touch with other schools and discussing how we can spread best practice to all schools in the Thames Valley and will hopefully be launching a new project later this year.

As well as increasing the number of neighbourhood police officers locally, as part of my Education Strategy, every secondary school in Thames Valley now has a dedicated schools police officer, and primary schools also have access to local support. The important role these officers play can be both dealing with incidents involving children, as either victims or perpetrators, but also working with teachers to educate children - and parents - about some of the risks facing them.

**Matthew Barber**  
Your voice in  
Thames Valley

**STAY IN TOUCH**  
matthewbarber.co.uk  
@matthewbarberpcc  
@matthew\_barber

JOIN MY WHATSAPP COMMUNITY

Presented by Matthew Barber on his own behalf, of Warburton House, 11-13 High Street, Wilmslow, Cheshire, Cheshire, SK9 1HL

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# Local directory

## What's On ....

| Venue              | Telephone    | Website   |
|--------------------|--------------|---|
| <b>Didcot</b>      |              |   |
| Cornerstone        | 01235 515144 | <a href="https://www.cornerstone-arts.org/whats-on">https://www.cornerstone-arts.org/whats-on</a>     |
| Cineworld          | 0871 2002000 | <a href="https://www.cineworld.co.uk/cinemas/didcot/">https://www.cineworld.co.uk/cinemas/didcot/</a> |
| <b>Wallingford</b> |              |   |
| Corn Exchange      | 01491 825000 | <a href="https://www.cornexchange.org.uk/whats-on/">https://www.cornexchange.org.uk/whats-on/</a>     |
| <b>Wantage</b>     |              |   |
| The Beacon         | 01235 763456 | <a href="https://www.beaconwantage.co.uk/whats-on/">https://www.beaconwantage.co.uk/whats-on/</a>     |
| <b>Abingdon</b>    |              |   |
| The Abbey Cinema   | 01235 616000 | <a href="https://theabbey.ac/web">https://theabbey.ac/web</a>   |

## Useful links

| Organisation          | Website   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Upton Village website | <a href="https://www.uptonvillage.co.uk/">https://www.uptonvillage.co.uk/</a>                                 |
| Upton Village Hall    | <a href="https://www.uptonvillagehall.co.uk/">https://www.uptonvillagehall.co.uk/</a>                         |
| Upton Wine Club       | <a href="https://uptonwineclub.com/">https://uptonwineclub.com/</a>   |
| Upton Village Social  | <a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/231071594674815">https://www.facebook.com/groups/231071594674815</a> |

Various WhatsApp groups also exist - please ask a neighbour for details!

## Service centre

If you are an Upton Village resident and have a skill or trade that other residents might find useful, please contact the editor with a short summary of your skill/trade and your contact details. We will include these in the next edition of Upton News, free of charge.

Listings will initially be restricted to Upton Village residents but if there are any skills or trades not covered, then we may include entries from residents of nearby villages.

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# Useful contacts

| Contact  | Telephone    | email  |
|--|--------------|--|
| <b>Upton News</b><br>Upton News Editor                   | n/a          | <a href="mailto:uptonox1news@gmail.com">uptonox1news@gmail.com</a>   |
| <b>Churn Benefice</b><br>Father Jason St. John Nicolle   | 01235 850267 | <a href="mailto:office@churnchurches.co.uk">office@churnchurches.co.uk</a>   |
| Revd Louise Butler                                       | 07837 009730 | <a href="mailto:revlouiseb@aol.com">revlouiseb@aol.com</a>   |
| Revd John Clarke   | 01235 510073 | <a href="mailto:jphclarke@gmail.com">jphclarke@gmail.com</a>   |
| Revd Dr Mark Rhodes-Smith                                | 01235 850267 | <a href="mailto:mark.rhodes-smith@churnchurches.co.uk">mark.rhodes-smith@churnchurches.co.uk</a>                       |
| Elaine de Ridder   | 01235 850267 | <a href="mailto:office@churnchurches.co.uk">office@churnchurches.co.uk</a>   |
| <b>Parish Council</b><br>Chair                           | n/a          | <a href="mailto:francoisey@councillors.uptonparishcouncil.gov.uk">francoisey@councillors.uptonparishcouncil.gov.uk</a> |
| Clerk  | n/a          | <a href="mailto:parish.clerk@uptonparishcouncil.gov.uk">parish.clerk@uptonparishcouncil.gov.uk</a>                     |
| <b>VoWH District Councillors</b><br>Hayleigh Gascoigne   | n/a          | <a href="mailto:hayleigh.gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk">hayleigh.gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk</a>                     |
| Debra Dewhurst   | n/a          | <a href="mailto:debra.dewhurst@whitehorsedc.gov.uk">debra.dewhurst@whitehorsedc.gov.uk</a>                             |
| <b>Oxfordshire County Councillor</b><br>Rebekah Fletcher | n/a          | <a href="mailto:rebekah.fletcher@oxfordshire.gov.uk">rebekah.fletcher@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>                           |
| <b>Member of Parliament</b><br>Olly Glover               | 0207 219 765 | <a href="mailto:olly.glover.mp@parliament.uk">olly.glover.mp@parliament.uk</a>   |
| <b>Astons Online</b><br>Bruno Brunskill                  | 07780 958249 | <a href="mailto:theastonsonline@gmail.com">theastonsonline@gmail.com</a>   |
| <b>United Charities</b><br>Main contact                  | n/a          | <a href="mailto:unitedcharities@outlook.com">unitedcharities@outlook.com</a>   |

## And finally ...

Due to budgetary constraints, Upton News is published in electronic format only. A copy is placed on the Upton Village [website](#) each month, which you can download. We also manage a distribution list whose subscribers receive a copy directly in their email Inbox at the start of each month.

If you would like to be added to this list, then please email [me](#) and I will add your email address to our database. Thank you for your interest!